



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**HUMAN RESOURCE STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING  
FUNCTIONS AS PRACTISED IN SELECTED HOTELS IN PENANG**

**AZLITA BINTI ABDUL JALIL**

**FPP 2002 17**

**HUMAN RESOURCE STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING FUNCTIONS AS  
PRACTISED IN SELECTED HOTELS IN PENANG**

**By**

**AZLITA BINTI ABDUL JALIL**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**February 2002**



## DEDICATION

Syukur alhamdulillah to Allah SWT for giving me the perseverance and strength to complete this thesis. My deepest gratitude and love to my father Abdul Jalil Syed Mohamed and my brother Izil Kamal Abdul Jalil for their patience, understanding and encouragement. This thesis is specially dedicated to my late mother, Ku Azizah Ku Hassan.

I would also like to extend my special thanks to everyone else who has helped me along the way, either directly or indirectly towards the completion of this thesis. A special thanks to my second family who had helped me and provided me with shelter while undergoing my Master's Degree and also to all my beloved friends who had been there for me during difficult times. My deepest appreciation and gratitude to all of you for your support, patience and love.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**Chairman: Dr. Asma Ahmad**

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Training functions are widely needed and known for its importance in organisations all over the world. Top management needs to be committed to training functions and development activities. This is because top management plays critical role in the success or failure of any training functions. Unfortunately, in Malaysia, it is not given sufficient focus yet as it is assumed to be costly and a waste of time, but in hotel industry, training is needed very much as it involves the staff skills and performance. This study examined the background characteristics of selected hotels in Penang, the contributing factors of the improper practice of training functions in hotels.

This is a descriptive survey research. It utilised questionnaires as the mode of data collection. The data was analysed in descriptive statistics. The nature of the population and questions to be answered in this study warranted the use of quantitative research approach.

The respondents of the research were the staff of human resource departments of the selected hotels in Penang. Questionnaires were distributed and collected personally from 44 respondents of 15 selected hotels in Penang.

From the research, it was found that the training functions practised differs between small, medium and big organisations. Bigger hotels have a well sorted plan for training functions and the improper practice of training functions in big hotels are not big compared to smaller hotels. This is seen from the capability of the hotel's finances, manpower and expertise in HR Departments to carry out training functions. The contributing factors to the improper practice of training functions in hotels are due to five contributing factors which is the lack of the realization of training functions, lack of manpower in HR departments, lack of financial requirement to run training functions, lack of management's policy, leadership, skills, knowledge, attitudes and expertise to operate training functions and the lack of realization of the outcome of training functions in hotels. Results show that the factors do influence training functions practised in hotels. This study can be a guide for the hotels for improvement in their training functions with the realisation of the improper practice of training functions in their organisations.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

**PERSEPSI PEKERJA SUMBER MANUSIA MENGENAI  
PENGAMALAN FUNGSI-FUNGSI LATIHAN DI  
HOTEL-HOTEL TERPILIH DI PENANG**

**Oleh**

**AZLITA BINTI ABDUL JALIL**

**Februari 2002**

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Pengamalan fungsi-fungsi latihan amat diperlukan dan penting dalam setiap organisasi di seluruh negara. Pihak pentadbiran perlu komited terhadap perlaksanaan aktiviti-aktiviti latihan dan pembangunan. Ini adalah kerana pihak pentadbiran memainkan peranan penting di dalam keberkesanan pengamalan fungsi-fungsi latihan. Malangnya, di Malaysia, fungsi-fungsi latihan tidak diberikan penekanan lagi kerana ianya dianggap membazir dan membuang masa, tetapi latihan amat diperlukan di dalam industri perhotelan kerana ia melibatkan kemahiran dan prestasi pekerja. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui latar belakang hotel-hotel yang terpilih untuk kajian di Penang dan faktor-faktor yang menghalang pengamalan fungsi-fungsi latihan di hotel-hotel terpilih.

Kajian ini adalah kajian yang bersifat penghuraian tinjauan. Pengumpulan maklumat dibuat dengan menggunakan soal-selidik. Kaedah kajian kuantitatif digunakan bagi pengumpulan maklumat.

Responden-responden bagi kajian ini terdiri daripada perkerja-pekerja daripada jabatan sumber manusia hotel-hotel terpilih di Penang. Borang soal selidik diagih dan dikumpul sendiri oleh pengkaji daripada 44 responden daripada 15 hotel yang terpilih di Penang bagi kajian.

Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa faktor-faktor yang menghalang pengamalan fungsi-fungsi latihan berbeza bergantung kepada saiz organisasi, sama ada ianya terdiri daripada organisasi kecil, sederhana ataupun besar. Hotel-hotel besar mempunyai perancangan perlaksanaan latihan yang lebih baik dan halangan bagi perlaksanaan latihan di hotel-hotel besar adalah lebih kurang berbanding dengan hotel-hotel kecil. Ini adalah kerana hotel kecil mempunyai kekurangan peruntukan kewangan, kekurangan pekerja dan kepakaran di Jabatan Sumber Manusia bagi mengendalikan perlaksanaan latihan. Faktor-faktor yang menghalang pengamalan fungsi-fungsi latihan di hotel-hotel terdiri dari lima punca iaitu kekurangan kepekaan terhadap kepentingan fungsi-fungsi latihan, kekurangan sumber tenaga di Jabatan Sumber Manusia, kekurangan sumber kewangan bagi mengendalikan fungsi latihan, kekurangan penekanan oleh pihak pentadbiran mengenai polisi, kepimpinan, kemahiran, pengetahuan, sikap dan kepakaran bagi mengendalikan fungsi latihan dan kekurangan kepekaan terhadap hasil yang akan diperolehi dari pengamalan fungsi-fungsi latihan jika diamalkan di hotel. Hasil kajian akan dapat membantu pihak pentadbiran hotel sebagai panduan bagi perubahan dan kemajuan di hotel mereka.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many people have contributed in different ways to the completion of this thesis. I would like to express special appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Asma Ahmad, for her guidance during the entire process, without that this research would not have completed successfully. Special appreciation and grateful thanks are extended to my graduate committee members: Prof. Aminah Ahmad and Dr. Jamilah Othman for their insightful comments.

Special thanks to the staff of human resource management departments of the selected hotels in Penang for their co-operation. I am very grateful to all the respondents of the study.

Finally, my appreciation goes to my loving and concerned friends, family and relatives who has been very supportive throughout my study and ensures this research a success.



I certify that an Examination Committee met on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2002 to conduct the final examination of Azlita Binti Abdul Jalil on her Master of Science thesis entitled “Human Resource Staff Perceptions of Training Functions as Practised in Selected Hotels in Penang” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committees are as follow:

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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**AZLITA BINTI ABDUL JALIL**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of Problem**

Hotel industry is one of Malaysia's sources of income generating and source of workforce. The industry is also a huge source of jobs. Hotels, resorts and restaurants represent tremendous revenue potential and employment opportunity for people with a broad spectrum of skills (Herman & Eller, 1991). Malaysian tourism industry is considered widely known all over the world because of the beautiful scenery, great weather & lovely culture among the Malaysian population. These factors attract tourist all over the world to come back to Malaysia to enjoy the amusing and interesting characteristics in our country. Therefore, hotel industry plays important roles in ensuring that tourism activities increases and delivers a great image to our nation and country throughout the world.

Penang is a famous state known for tourism. Therefore, there is a large number of hotels located in this island. The hotels range of small, medium and big hotels whereby it can be categorized from the hotels' number of stars, whether it is a 3 stars, 4 stars or 5 stars hotels and the number of the hotels' staff. Some hotels are located at the city and regularly accommodated by guests on business arrangements at Penang town. Bayview City, CITITEL, Shangrila Hotel, Agora Hotel, Oriental Hotel are among the city hotels in Penang. Most of the other hotels are at the beach areas most visited during holiday festivals among Malaysians, tourist agencies and tourist groups from all parts of the

world. Batu Feringghi area has a large number of hotels consisting big, medium and small hotels. Among the big hotels are Mutiara Beach Resort, Shangrila Rasa Sayang Hotel and Shangrila Golden Sands Hotel. Some of the medium hotels are Penang Bayview Beach Resort, Park Royal Penang, Sandy Bay Paradise and others whereas the smaller hotels are Casuarina Beach Resort, Copthorne Hotel, Princess Hotel and others. There are also a few medium new hotels along Gurney Drive, a famous beach area. Overall, there are about twenty hotels regularly visited in Penang. Services in hotels play major roles in ensuring that customers would come back for another stay at the hotels. This would only be possible if the customers are satisfied with the services provided. The staff then needs regular training routines and guidance in delivering their professional skills in performing their work. Effective employee training is the key to successful food-safety programmes at hotels, according to hotel quality assurance executives. As a result, some chains are developing new training programmes or more effectively communicating current rules and regulations to employees (Blank, 2000). Human Resource Management of the hotels have to select the best candidates for work and ensure that they are well trained and deliver their best performance to the hotels' guests. This is where training functions comes as an important tool in service industry. The hospitality industry is particularly labour-intensive, a characteristic that is only mildly affected by technology. Cost-consciousness has moderated travelers spending and raised their expectations for quality of products and services. Competing on quality requires staff that is capable of delivering consistent, good service-making beds, parking cars, serving meals, fixing room temperature controls, boning chickens, planning meetings and generally responding to guests' needs promptly, intelligently, courteously and enthusiastically (Herman & Eller,



1991) Training functions are widely needed and known for its importance in organisations all over the world. Top management needs to be committed to training and development activities, including the involvement in assessing training plans and policies and creating a suitable environment in order to implement plans and policies. This is because top management support plays critical roles in the success or failure of any training and development activities (Khulida, 1999). Unfortunately, in Malaysia, it is not given sufficient focus yet as it is assumed to be costly and a waste of time, but in hotel industry training is indeed very much needed as it involves the staff skills and performance. Tourism Policy Group (1995) stated that the majority of employers view training as a cost rather than an investment. A low level of on-job training activity occurs. Skills and experiences are lost to the industry at the end of each season when staff is paid off. Hotel industry consists small number of staff compared to large number of staff in factories which is considered as big industry. Therefore, training functions are given more emphasis in factories compared to training in hotels. Herman & Ellen (1991) also stated that little research has been done on training in the hospitality industry. Tourism Policy Group (1995) also stated that training in this sector is the ‘problem child’ as there is no training culture in this sector and the sector itself is still developing. This is due to the budget and financial standing of the hotel management. This scenario needs to change and this is what this study wish to explore from the research.

From the researcher’s experience of undergoing a practical training at a hotel industry’s Human Resources Management Department, the researcher was exposed to the routines and the tasks of the department’s responsibilities and duties. Training functions are not appropriately focussed on in this industry due to a few contributing factors.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse the training functions as practiced by Human Resource staff in selected hotels in Penang.

Thomas stated that the most commonly found tourism or hospitality enterprise is small. Little research has been conducted in these organisations. Matlay stated that the issue of training in small business sector of the British economy has largely been neglected by academic researchers and human resource planning, development and management specialists who, until recently, were content to suggest solutions which were more relevant to the businesses strategies of larger firms (Jameson, 1999).

Training functions have long been given sufficient emphasis in other countries but it had not been broadly focused on in Malaysia yet. Organisations, with large numbers of employees need training functions as a source of input to their work procedures. Unfortunately, training functions are not well stressed on in Malaysia as it is said to be costly, time consuming and does not benefit the employees and the organisations. Larger organisations are more exposed to the importance of training functions and are more privilege to conduct training functions. Service line needs employees with required skills, sufficient knowledge and proper attitudes in performing their line of duties. Therefore, training functions are important tools of contributing the required factors. Unfortunately, service line industry, mainly hotel industry does not provide enough training for their staff. There are a few factors that had led to the factors contributing towards the improper practice of training functions in hotel industry but the main factors are as follow: the lack of realisation of the importance of training functions, lack of manpower in Human Resource Departments, lack of financial requirement to operate training functions, the lack of management's policy, leadership, skills, knowledge,

attitudes and expertise, and the lack of realisation of the outcome of training functions among the hotel's supervision. Therefore, hotel management needs to be more observant with this scenario as training functions are very important in service line employees as it provides them with skill, knowledge and attitudes which can build up their competence and ensure a great performance in their daily duties. Human Resource Development should therefore be well recognised and applied in all organisations in Malaysia if we wish to move further in the tourism industry as well as a resourceful developed country.

Human Resource Development is an element of Human Resource Management that also needs to be set up and authorised in organizations. It focuses on the elements of training and development, career development and organization development. Unfortunately, not all organisations focus on the relevance of these practices required. Thus, it leads to the negligence of staff's competency, low motivation and commitment towards their performance. Subsequently, this research is conducted to explore the factors contributing towards the improper practice of training functions in selected hotels as perceived by the hotel management to study the problems in its supervision of training functions as it is not well practiced.

Human Resource Management should be practiced in organisations as it is a supporting tool for good management. The practices deliver the greatest contribution to the productivity of the manpower and it ensures the stability of the organisation. Training functions in hotel industry are handled by this department. Therefore, in order to have good training functions, Human Resource Management Departments play important roles in ensuring that training functions are well conducted.

## **Statement of Problem**

Hotel employees need to get sufficient skills in performing their work as service line workers has to be well trained to be skillful and able to deliver superb services to the hotel guests. Unfortunately, training functions are not given much emphasis in the hotel industry. It is seen that the competence of the staff in hotel industry is low and this gives an impact to the low performance and productivity of the company. Hotel management needs to carry out training functions to increase the staff's competence and later lead to a better performance of the staff in delivering their daily duties. The attitude of employer's towards Human Resource Development Practices, mainly training functions in hotel management plays important roles for the building of employees' competence and motivation in providing better performances for the companies' productivity and survival in the industry. The results would be beneficial for the organisations, the individual development and the country as it provides an ongoing income and a source of workforce for Malaysians. Training functions are highly needed as the hotel's image and services are represented through the workers ability to serve the guests. Therefore, the hotel management needs to analyse their training functions in the industry and implement suitable training procedures. Training functions in hotel industry may not be well practised due to the management's difficulties of supervising and conducting the needed resources.

## **Objectives of the Study**

In general, the study aims to examine the training functions in hotel industry to obtain suggestions for improvement which can later on increase the competence and leads

to better performance of the staff in the selected hotels in Penang. Specifically, the study intends to :

1. To analyse whether there is a lack of realisation of the importance of training functions in hotels
2. To analyse whether there is a lack of manpower in Human Resource Departments in hotels
3. To analyse whether there is a lack of financial requirement to operate training functions in hotels
4. To analyse whether there is a lack of the management's policy, leadership, skills, knowledge, attitudes and expertise to operate training functions in hotels
5. To identify whether there is a lack of realisation of the expected outcome of training functions in hotels

### **Significance of Study**

This study involves the hotel management of the selected hotel industry in Penang. This research is significant to the aspect of exploring the training functions to promote a better understanding and recognition of the importance of it being fully applied in the selected hotels, as it has a very strong influence towards employee's competence in the work performance.

The findings may also help the management to realise the importance of competence in an employee to perform well in their working environment, obtained through highly skilled and trained staff from the training functions conducted. Thus, the

hotel management will then get to see their current situation clearer regarding the company's training functions and the human resource development aspects of the hotels faced and have been facing to seek actions and make improvement. This will later be a stepping stone for the hotel management to plan their training functions better for their staff once they have overcome the hindrance they have been dealing with before. This will later on ensure that the competence and the skills of the hotels' staff will increase and their performance will be more impressive than their present conditions.

This study is expected to make the management realise that they need to carry out proper training functions to ensure that the staff's individual development is ensured through the conduct of regular training programmes organized by the management. will also lead to an increase of the hotel's sales once the customers are satisfied with the services provided.

This study will also point out the perceptions of the training functions that were never looked into by the management and this will later on make them realise that human resources are important assets of the hotel management. Therefore the hotel management would have to be concerned of the staff's satisfaction to be able to make full use of them for the company's success. The employees need to be well trained and given sufficient and continuous guidance to be skillful, positive thinking and informative in their work progress.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The training programmes focused on is restricted only to the hotel management's employees of the hotel industry in Penang area among the staff of Human Resource

Management Departments of the selected hotels and not on the operational staff of the hotels. Therefore, the number of respondents are limited as human resource management of hotel industry only consist a small number of staff where there are those with eight staff in a Human Resource Department and there are even those with only one staff in that particular department. It varies from an organisation to another depending on whether it is a small hotel or big hotel.

### **Operational Definitions**

**Attitudes of Employer's :** Hotel management's thinking, plans, action and practices, where the top management support plays important roles in the success or failure of any training function.

**Human Resource Development :** Activities conducted for the developmental aspect of staff and the organisation, set by the top management, including the involvement in assessing training plans and policies, staff's motivation and creating a suitable working environment.

**Competence of Employees :** A collaboration of skills, commitment and quality of employees' work, which is the hotels' most precious resource, instilled through training functions.

**Training Functions :** A continuous learning process which is employee based where the programmes are specifically designed based on the evaluations of training needs.

Training is meant to achieve the hotel's objective by producing skilled employees and improve troubled employees' performances.

**Individual Performance :** The result of an individual's work task and action in delivering their job.

**Hotel management :** The supervision of the organisation's staff, their work flow, working environment and the organisation's sales.

**Big hotels :** Classification of hotels with a number of 300 over staff.

**Medium hotels :** Classification of hotels with a number of 150 to 300 staff.

**Small hotels :** Classification of hotels with a number of 50 to 150 staff.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Hotel Industry**

Effective employee training is the key to successful food-safety programmes at hotels, according to hotel quality-assurance executives. As a result, some chains are developing new training programmes or more effectively communicating current rules and regulations to employees (Blank, 2000). Therefore, it is essential for all hotel management to stress on the importance of training functions in order to ensure that staff is well trained and delivers their duties successfully.

Service quality is identified as a performance indicator (Worsfold, 1999). This is why hotel staff needs to get sufficient training and development towards improvement in their performance in ensuring the service quality delivered are superb, talked about and welcomed. Service industry also needs to stress on the need for training functions as it is the key to the company's business as the performance of the staff represents the hotel's profit and stability in the industry.

Hotel industry focuses on service performance. Therefore, the employees need to be skilled, motivated and properly trained before they can perform their duties to the hotel customers. Training functions are essential and important in ensuring that the front-liners or the operational staff are good in their speech as communication is the most important tool in service industry among the hotel workers. The skills of courtesy, professionalism and competence are needed among staff in hotel industry. Therefore,